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THE ASSAULT ON EQUALITY

RACE, RIGHTS AND THE NEW ORTHODOXY

Guest-edited by Adolph Reed Jr. and Julian Bond

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EDITORIALS.

Racism is alive and well in America, and not just in Louisiana. It deforms political life just as it skews the life chances of all Americans. Nevertheless, the on-again, off-again efforts inside the Administration to gut a 1965 executive order mandating affirmative action by federal agencies and government contractors demonstrate that Republicans can't stop playing the race card. Indeed, such is the potency of white resentment that many liberals now argue that the struggle for racial equality should be abandoned. But those politicians, from George Bush to David Duke, who manipulate white anxieties are best defeated not by "transcending" race but by challenging racism head-on, as Jason Berry demonstrates below. And as the contributors to this special issue show, the cause of equality remains right and urgent. In the words of guest-editors Adolph Reed Jr. and Julian Bond: "We hear a Realpolitik *that wants . . . to 'get beyond' the race issue by having minorities go away. That strategy is both obnoxious and doomed."*

Louisiana Hateride

New Orleans

The rise of David Duke is a parable of television, the great arena of value neutrality. His story is the triumph of image—the white crusader, at once victim and victor, standing up against the so-called liberal media—over substance. While the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, after two years of slow-building, erratic coverage, finally unleashed a volley of potent reports backed by editorials worthy of a Pulitzer Prize, the TV networks let Duke fine-tune his image as an antihero who makes racism respectable. His national media performances enhanced his stature; he pulled in mail and money from around the country. He reportedly received 1,100 contributions from New York City.

Among the softest interviewers were Larry King, Phil Donahue and Ted Koppel, whose collective deference failed to

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the mid-1980s, in which he was being "crucified" by the press. But when Duke brought it up on *Meet the Press*, you could practically hear the groans; David Broder and Garrick Utley wore pained expressions. Then NBC Washington bureau chief Tim Russert asked him to name the three largest employers in Louisiana. Duke couldn't, and that hurt him bad.

The Louisiana broadcast media gave Duke an easy ride, covering him as a political personality, letting him set the agenda. A televised debate here November 2 was typical: Five smooth air presences from around the state failed to ask Duke a single hard question about who he really is. Instead, they lobbed softball queries about what he'd do as governor, thereby adding to his veneer of respectability.

The next morning's Sunday *New York Times* had a front-page photograph of three young men wearing N.A.A.W.P. T-shirts in Dubuque, Iowa, a heartland town, mostly white, where "a backlash of fear and intolerance has erupted." Although the *Times* story mentioned Duke, it did not directly link him to his own organization. No one has done the full story on the N.A.A.W.P.

Not until the second debate, on November 6 on Louisiana Public Television, did Duke face questioning that registered what millions feel. Norman Robinson, a black anchorman at the local NBC affiliate, WDSU-TV, did not conceal his anger in asking the "have you changed" question.

Robinson quoted Duke's own comments: Jews in the ashbin of history and "Horses contributed more to the building of American civilization than blacks." He then said, "As a minority, I am scared, sir," and referred to a "vile, evil, diabolical mentality" before asking Duke to "convince" him that minorities could rest safely should he win.

Here was the cause-and-effect of Duke's politics capsulized in a tense, bitter moment on television. Duke gave his standard apology about his "past intolerance" with a quick segue to others' racism, accusing Edwards of trying to buy black votes.

"We're talking about political genocide," Robinson came back. "Are you, as a newfound Christian, willing to apologize to minorities . . . whom you have so dastardly insulted, sir?"

The "sir" was a genteel stroke, mocking the gentlemanly sheen of bigotry. And as Duke offered a trite apology, Robinson cut in, asking him to repudiate the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis. Again Duke moved from a trite apology to a condemnation of reverse racism. Robinson interrupted, "As well as against black people?"

"Mr. Robinson," said Duke, affecting the hurt air of a media victim, "I don't think you're really being fair to me, sir."

"I don't think you're being honest, sir," replied Robinson in a flash of cosmic truth.

"You're not—— You're doing the debate here. You're putting me down," said Duke, clearly flustered.

The next day WDSU-TV was flooded with angry calls—many of them saying exactly the same words, giving the impression that it was a Duke phone bank. By midafternoon those calls had subsided and a new wave of calls supporting Robinson outnumbered those criticizing his tactics, according to the station.

"I think Norman's questioning was a turning point for blacks," says State Senator-elect Marc Morial. "Before that there was a fear of questioning him in some quarters. He had to be confronted. Too many people in Nazi Germany made the mistake of not doing so."

As Tulane historian Lawrence Powell, a founder of the Coalition Against Racism and Nazism, says: "You have to deal with Duke as a moral problem and not a political issue. That's the way to defeat him."

So what's a closet Nazi to do next? *Times-Picayune* reporter Tyler Bridges, who covered him closely, has written that Duke is a "self-employed career fundraiser." He can't do it without free media. And so on November 18 he announced his presidential exploratory committee. A campaign in perpetuity, his plunge into Republican primaries gives him a shot at qualifying for matching federal dollars.

Until network television approaches him as Edward R. Murrow did Joseph McCarthy—as a charlatan to be exposed by true journalism—he will poison the already bitter social discourse of this land like nothing we've ever seen.

JASON BERRY

Jason Berry's books include Amazing Grace, *a memoir of civil rights politics, and an investigation of child molestation in the priesthood,* And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, *forthcoming from Doubleday.*

★

ON DAVID DUKE AS REPUBLONAZI (REPRISE)

The G.O.P. denies
The slightest Dukish ties.
They're sorry that he ran.
They loathe the Ku Klux Klan.
They've always been assured
The Holocaust occurred.
And yet, it's true that he
And they (the G.O.P.)
When stepping to the mike
Do tend to sound alike:
"Blame middle-class defeats
On quotas, welfare cheats."
One word they both hold back
Is what they both mean: black.
The codes give them away:
He's got their DNA.

It's funny who you meet
By peeking 'neath the sheet.

Calvin Trillin

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"This woman is possessed by the Devil. . . . The Lord cleared my Vision and revealed this unto me outside the Baby-Killing Clinic when Judi Bari smote with Satan's f words the humble and faithful servants of the Lord who had come there to make witness against Abortion. I saw Satan's flames shoot forth from her mouth her eyes and ears proving forever that this was no Godly Woman no Ruth full of obedience to procreate and multiply the children of Adam."

And thus it was that in May of 1990 the Lord's Avenger, in his own words, "put the bomb in her car whilst she was at the meeting with the loggers. The wicked shall know no Refuge." At first the bomb did not go off, proving the prescience and all-round resourcefulness of the Lord, since He was waiting for Darryl Cherney to join Judi Bari in a drive south to Santa Cruz, through Oakland. Then, "the hand of the Watch Moved once again and the bomb was Armed and Administered Divine Justice. But it did not kill! I had wanted that she should be cut Down quickly like a diseased horse that must be put down but the Lord Willed that she should Live on in Pain 'suffering the vengeance of eternal fire' (Jude) so that others would Cringe with Fear and Horror at the Terrible Scourge of the Lord. Now all Who would come to the forests and worship trees like gilded Idols have been Warned. They have seen the Fate that awaits them."

The Lord's Avenger is still at large somewhere along the North Coast, no doubt (if he was aware of it) nodding approval at Dannemeyer's speech, so exactly in fit with his own theological justifications for attempted murder.

. . . And Egg on the Face of the Tiger

"Frederick Douglass and Paul Robeson had white wives, and nobody quoted here is fit to shine—you'll excuse the expression—those men's shoes." This was Christopher Hitchens in *XXIst century,* attacking people like Russell Adams of Howard University for citing Clarence Thomas's marriage to a white woman as a sign of rejection of the black community.

Why should we excuse the expression? There's also the problem that Eslanda, Robeson's only wife, was black, though he did have relationships with white women. Essie herself wrote in a "pencil draft" cited by Robeson's splendid biographer, Martin Duberman, that she had "thought a great deal about this racial mixing business" and concluded that "when a white woman takes a Negro man as a lover, she usually lowers him and herself too; white people and Negroes feel rather that she has a bull or a stallion or a mule in her stable." Presumably Hitchens would have put her on the shoeshine stand too.

Hitchens rallied to the defense of October Surprise theory last week, saying that although Ari Ben-Menashe, Jamshid Hashemi and Richard Brenneke (whose bogus testimony he once extolled as the smoking gun in the conspiracy) were "habitually deceitful riffraff," they had all been right about some things, thus proving their credentials as sources to be believed at one level. To take Ben-Menashe, he "gave evidence to Seymour Hersh (no pushover when it comes to fact checking) about the involvement of Robert Maxwell's organization in Israeli nuclear espionage. As I write, this disclosure is convulsing Fleet Street by the simple, old-fashioned device of turning out to be true."

What in fact is convulsing Fleet Street is the way Seymour Hersh and his London publisher, Matthew Evans of Faber and Faber, were duped by a well-known con man called Joe Flynn. Following Maxwell's death (Herb Caen says his last word was Roseglub), the publisher announced that Hersh would soon disclose evidence of the participation of Maxwell's men in the kidnapping of Mordechai Vanunu, who had uncovered Israel's nuclear arsenal at Dimona to the London *Sunday Times* and was subsequently heisted by the Mossad.

Flynn (one of whose coups had been to sell a U.S. tabloid "Jimmy Hoffa's shoes" for £25,000) lured Evans to Amsterdam where, in the guise of "Patrick Begg, detective," he demanded and got £500, confiding thereafter that he had attended a meeting in Geneva in 1986 with *Mirror* journalists who recruited him to find Vanunu and bug the phone of a *Sunday Times* reporter. Hersh, a big pushover who later admitted he should have done some fact checking, fell for the story.

One of the *Mirror* journalists turns out to have been, on the day in question, not in the Cornavin Hotel in Geneva but in Somerset, interviewing Ian Botham, a cricketer, for *The People.* Hersh claimed he had logs from the hotel showing calls to Tel Aviv, but Michel Krieger, the hotel manager, says that no such logging system existed in the hotel. If Hersh had bothered to read the original *Sunday Times* reconstruction of the Vanunu kidnapping carefully, he would have seen that the Mossad would hardly have needed the services of Flynn/Begg to find Vanunu, since its agent Cindy Hanin had made contact with him in London two days earlier. It was thus improbable that she was also present in Geneva, as Hersh had claimed. Hersh now concedes he was conned.

At an earlier press conference in London Hersh had introduced Ben-Menashe as one of his prime sources for *The Samson Option.* In the wake of Maxwell's terminal descent into the Atlantic, Ben-Menashe announced that the publisher had been the money launderer in Israel's shipment of arms to Iran and may have been murdered for his knowledge. He added that now he, Ben-Menashe, feared for his life. He makes a profession out of wild claims like this. He once told my brother Andrew that Yitzhak Shamir had made him special negotiator with the P.L.O. and offered to take Andrew to Cairo to view the proceedings. In November of 1990 one of his lawyers, Mark Anthony Cristini, wrote to the Iran/*contra* special prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, claiming that Ben-Menashe was prepared to transfer the funds from the secret sales to Iran—amounting to $600 million—to the U.S. government in return for a cut of 10 percent—$60 million—plus immunity from prosecution and U.S. citizenship for himself and his mother.

Footnote: Hersh is also cowardly in his citations. Nowhere in the book does he acknowledge Noam Chomsky's discussion of the "Samson complex" in the concluding chapter of *The Fateful Triangle* (1983), which prefigures Hersh's theme. He prefers to cite an allusion by Norman Podhoretz to the Samson Option.

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ARTICLES.

Equality: Why We Can't Wait

ADOLPH REED JR. AND JULIAN BOND

A specter is haunting liberal-left intellectual life—the specter of racist opportunism. From prestigious sociology departments to *The Atlantic*, *The American Prospect*, *Dissent* and *In These Times*, from *Washington Post* pundits to *New York Newsday* editors, its victim-blaming message echoes: Liberal and progressive forces have fallen onto hard times in American politics because they have become too closely identified with the excessive demands of blacks, feminists, etc. and have failed to give proper weight to the concerns of the beleaguered white working and middle classes. This story is rapidly congealing into an unexamined orthodoxy, a ritual lament that seeks to justify what is at best a failure of nerve.

In this lament, progressive agendas lost credibility, and/or Democrats lost the White House, because they deviated from the old New Deal coalition's focus on universalistic programs and became identified with "special interests." This alienated the Democratic Party's white working- and middle-class constituency, which both carried the fiscal burden for the programs targeted to others and felt that many of the specific programs affronted their own "traditional values."

Versions of this tale have proliferated. Some, like Theda Skocpol's in "Sustainable Social Policy: Fighting Poverty Without Poverty Programs" (*The American Prospect*, Summer 1990) and William Julius Wilson's in *The Truly Disadvantaged* and "Race-Neutral Policies and the Democratic Coalition" (*The American Prospect*, Spring 1990), concentrate on bemoaning the alleged hijacking of liberal social policy in the 1960s by small-minded black militants who insisted on race-targeted programs and censored public discussion of social pathologies among the black poor. Others, like Jonathan Rieder's in *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism*, and Jim Sleeper's in *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York*, champion the cause of whites who feel threatened by feminist demands and liberal initiatives aimed at advancing racial equality. The most extensive and coherent statement of the new orthodoxy by far, however, is Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall's new tract, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. Because of its comprehensiveness the Edsalls' volume epitomizes the current vogue.

Adolph Reed Jr. is a professor of political science at Northwestern University. Julian Bond is a longtime civil rights activist and a visiting professor at Harvard University and American University.

It is instructive that the Edsalls identify race rather than racism as the pivotal issue.

For the Edsalls the meter of history starts running in the mid-1960s. At that point Goldwaterite Republicans began what would become a successful polarization of American politics around the issues of racial liberalism, the proliferation of groups claiming institutionalized rights, and government spending—all three of which came to be identified with the Democratic Party.

The Goldwaterites were aided in this mission, the Edsalls say, by the "violent contagion of race riots in northern slums," the inflammatory antics of "black extremists" (who even taught right-wingers that "confrontation and rejection of accommodation were themselves mobilizing strategies") and the "reluctance of liberalism and the Democratic party to forthrightly acknowledge and address the interaction of crime, welfare dependency, joblessness, drug use, and illegitimacy with the larger questions of race and poverty." Although blacks' bad and insensitive behavior is pivotal in the Edsalls' story, others also contributed to the new polarization by "threatening the most entrenched traditions of the middle class"; among them were those who fought to secure constitutional protection for criminal defendants, advocates of reproductive liberty and proponents of gay rights.

Having laid this foundation, the Edsalls adorn it with many of the standard pieces of the new line. They present Daniel Patrick Moynihan's racist, scurrilously misogynous 1965 report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, as an unfairly scorned work of prophetic insight, and they even attempt to legitimize it by linking it to W.E.B. Du Bois's 1899 study, *The Philadelphia Negro*—also a standard move at the moment. (They neglect to mention, however, that Moynihan called for correcting young black men's putative character defects by shipping them into a "world away from women" in the military, coincidentally just as cannon-fodder needs were increasing along with escalations in Vietnam.) The Edsalls' attempt to vindicate Moynihan is part of a general attack on those who have dissented from victim-blaming rhetoric, particularly regarding inner-city poor people. Worse yet, the Edsalls say, liberals and the left have been irresponsible not only in failing to face up to poor blacks' socially destructive behavior but also in pursuing divisive strategies of social engineering in struggles for the integration of schools and public housing in Northern cities like Boston and Chicago.

They adduce these actions to show how the spread of civil rights activism in the North created a "growing link between race and partisan allegiance"—the core of their argument that a "chain reaction" driven by race has transformed the white electorate. And who is to blame? Upper-status white liberals and "extremist" or undeserving blacks undermined the Democratic coalition by challenging "traditionally" Democratic whites who were affronted by civil rights agendas. This combination of black bad behavior and white liberal insensitivity produced an "ugly disenchantment" with black aspirations, reaching from "the bungalow wards of Chicago . . . to prominent public intellectuals" like Norman Mailer.

In the context of this backlash, the Edsalls portray "ordinary citizens," the "average working man and woman" (to be "average" and "ordinary," of course, one must be white), as repelled by liberals' forsaking of "standardized merit-oriented criteria" for "racial preferences in hiring and in education." Listen carefully to their history of the period: "Lawsuits forcing court-ordered hiring and promotion in unions and in police and fire departments *were driving* a wedge between formerly Democratic white work-

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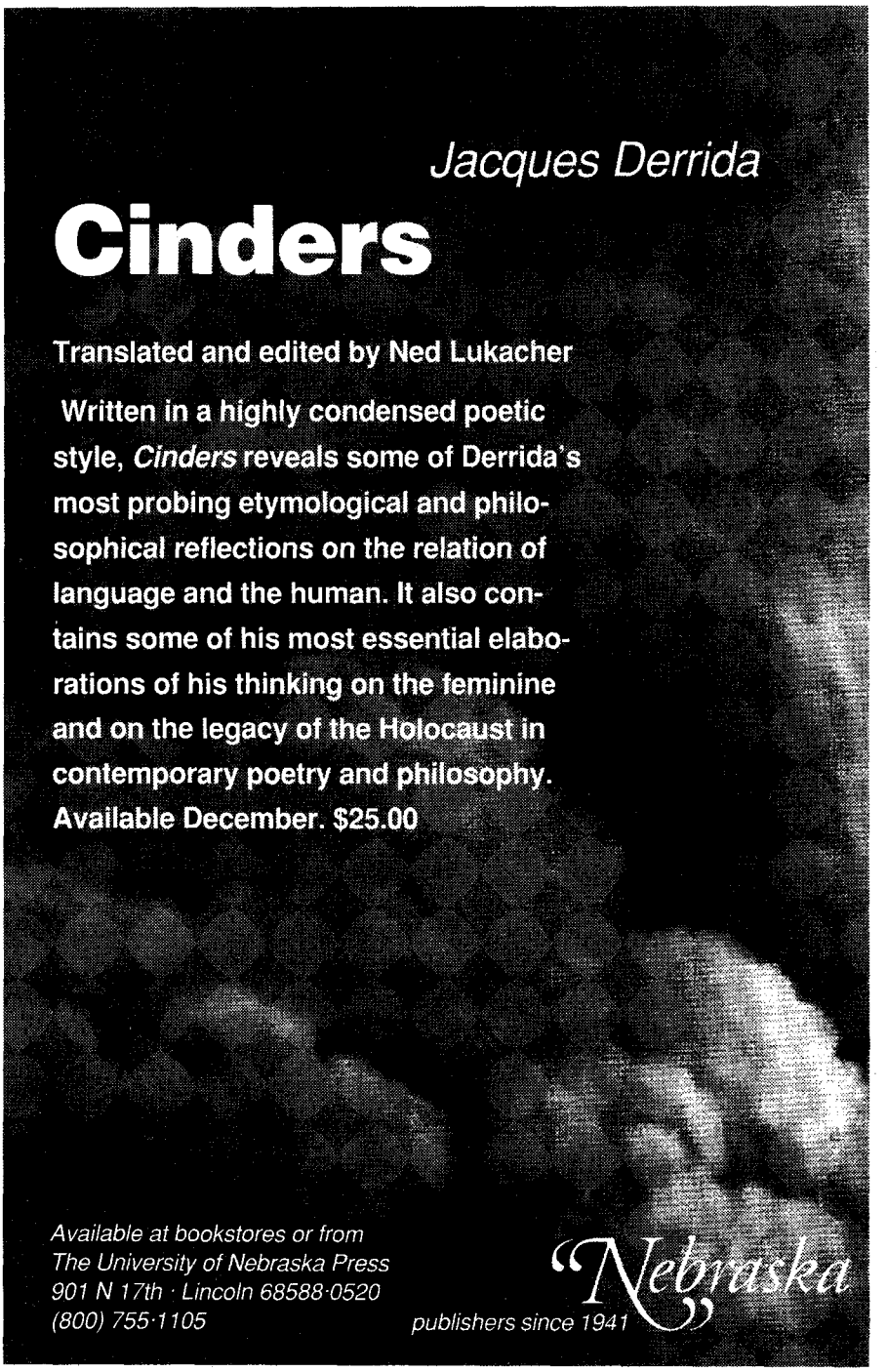
was surprising precisely because careful and thorough liberal scholarship had so recently demolished its prior incarnation as "culture of poverty" ideology in the 1960s and 1970s. The Edsalls ignore Carol Stack's accessible and widely read *All Our Kin*, which directly challenged Moynihan's pathological-matriarchy thesis with ethnographic data, and fail to recognize Eleanor Leacock's *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique* and Charles Valentine's *Culture and Poverty*, which systematically refuted the culture-of-poverty idea on both theoretical and empirical grounds as anthropologically and politically bankrupt.

Because theirs is the most elaborate presentation to date, the Edsalls most clearly reveal the complex of distortions and mystifications on which the new orthodoxy rests. They write as if American society emerged in 1964 from a state of nature. Only by doing so can they represent white working-class and middle-class hostility to black aspirations as a post–civil rights movement phenomenon, or romanticize the old New Deal Democratic coalition as an entity neutral with respect to distinctively racial stratification. This convenient amnesia sustains the lie that the put-upon Joe Six-Pack and the "average family" are not directly implicated as beneficiaries of the racially stratified system.

The Edsalls insulate the absurdity of this view by packing around it a comparably mystified notion of the suburbs as a new, coherent political constituency. For them, the phenomenon of postwar suburbanization had nothing to do with pre-existing racial polarization, and thus the attitude of white suburbanites now is a reaction against what they see as the excesses of the inner city. But the desire to flee from impoverished inner-city populations (and from blacks in general) that the Edsalls describe long preceded postwar suburbanization and was, in fact, one of the forces that drove it. While it is true that not living within the same municipality certainly reinforces white separation from inner-city life, suburbanization is more the effect than the cause of polarization. In addition, there are suburbs, and there are suburbs. Invocation of "suburban" as a euphemism for white, or even middle class, is not exactly accurate, as suburban life itself becomes increasingly diverse. Interestingly, the Edsalls demonstrate the polysemous character of the suburban image in their own stereotypes. On the one hand, they decry out-of-touch "suburban liberals" who ram race-mixing down the throats of the sturdy white working and middle classes; on the other, the suburb appears as a spawning ground for white racial impatience. Which is the real suburb, then—not to mention polyglot entities like East Orange, New Jersey; Mount Vernon, New York; Skokie, Illinois; Montgomery County, Maryland; De Kalb County, Georgia; Santa Clara County, California?

To their credit, the Edsalls note the major role of civil rights enforcement and government employment in accounting for the post-1964 rise in black income and occupational mobility. Yet they scold liberals for having aimed antidiscrimination efforts at unabashedly racial monopolies in building trade unions and municipal employment, efforts that "required whites to give up both customary privileges and substantial material rewards." They allow that those "practices clearly had discriminatory consequences, but they were also practices core to a host of craft unions across the country, unions that had been built not only as labor organizations, but as family and ethnic associations structuring community life." They veer from this sentimentality, wor-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ble accounts. The authors demystify the breezily nostalgic representation of an Edenic New Deal coalition and demonstrate ways that racial stratification continues to order the life chances of America's citizens.

Finally, at the risk of seeming defensive about our own pasts, we must take note of the curious circumstance that in virtually all versions of the narrative against which we write, the mid-1960s appear as the Fall. Some proponents of that view depict an era, moreover, most unfamiliar to those of us who were around at the time. In Theda Skocpol and William Julius Wilson's 1960s, for example, "black militants" were powerful enough to dictate the terms of federal social policy; in the Edsalls', only antiwar activists, not the war in Vietnam itself, caused domestic political conflict.

In some cases, perhaps, specific old personal grievances support this queer reading of 1960s radicalism. Perhaps it is also fed by beliefs that politics should not involve rocking the boat and convictions that minority poor people are a breed apart. Some liberals seem to be middle-aging into a tolerance of privilege that "just happens" to be racial. Across the board, though, this representation of the 1960s justifies a view that commitment to principle has little, if any, place in politics. It underwrites three strategic assumptions: (1) No price is too great to pay for the election of *any* Democrat to the presidency; (2) race is so monolithic and immutable a cleavage in American politics that progressive initiatives will inevitably fail if they openly endorse programs of racial justice; and (3) those "special interests" canonized in the 1960s—black Americans especially—must now do penance for the harm wrought by their profligate ways. We emphatically reject all three and insist that principle can indeed win.

One could just as easily look back to the 1960s and point the finger the other way. Many of us recall an understanding that part of the white left's mission was to organize and educate against racism within white middle- and working-class constituencies. That project obviously did not get very far, though many good people put a great deal of effort into it and continue to do so. Others either gave up or were fainthearted all along in their own commitment to the premise of racial equality. Thus we hear a *Realpolitik* that wants—in the mode of Liberal Republicanism in the 1870s—to "get beyond" the race issue by having minorities go away. That strategy is both obnoxious and doomed. Our only hope lies not in rejecting but in resuscitating the project of confronting racism in the white electorate for what it is and struggling with whites to overcome their commitments to racial privilege. Only then can we begin honestly and productively to discuss strategies for building a progressive movement that accounts for the complex and corrosive effects of racial stratification. No more euphemisms, no elaborate circumlocutions. Those who want to dispense with an egalitarian agenda should declare themselves forthrightly and stand on their convictions. That way we can all know who stands for what, and act accordingly. □

Race and the Democrats

RICHARD A. CLOWARD AND FRANCES FOX PIVEN

The current political wisdom, even among some on the left, is that blacks and liberals are to blame for the troubles of the Democratic Party. Supposedly, divisive demands for race-specific remedies for past discrimination advanced by blacks and their liberal allies antagonized the white working class, destroying the biracial and class-based coalition that championed progressive reform in America. By this account, it was wrongheaded to demand affirmative action or school integration or—most egregious of all—"welfare rights," because these policies highlighted race and exacerbated racial divisions. And it was nothing short of madness to advance these demands with the flamboyant and disruptive tactics that characterized the black movement.

There are three weaknesses in this argument, all fatal. The New Deal Democratic Party was not a working-class party; neither was it supported by a biracial coalition. And there was no way blacks could win concessions without alienating whites.

For a brief moment at the depth of the Depression, widespread panic and rising insurgency in the urban North prodded F.D.R. to adopt labor-oriented policies and rhetoric. But over the slightly longer run, it became clear that the party was hostage to its Southern wing. Constitutional arrangements were weighted toward the South in both the Electoral College and the Senate, and Congressional seniority arrangements delivered control of key committees to Southern one-party oligarchs.

Moreover, these oligarchs remained unchallenged, because constitutionally based governmental decentralization permitted states to use voter registration barriers to disfranchise blacks and most poor whites. As representatives of upper-strata whites, Southern Congressmen moved easily into alliances with Republicans, limiting Northern working-class power and preventing the New Deal coalition from becoming a labor party. Nor was there any possibility of a biracial party during the 1930s, since 80 percent of blacks lived in the South, where they were disfranchised.

The South extracted a high price for its fealty to the party (Roosevelt won as much as 85 percent of the Southern vote), mainly by blocking any national policies that would interfere with the low-wage and caste-bound Southern labor system. Southern Congressmen promoted right-to-work laws and other antilabor legislation, thus weakening the unions that had begun to serve as the mobilizing infrastructure of the Democratic Party. One consequence was that working-class voters could not control Democratic Presidents. Harry Truman may have vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act, but he invoked its strike-curbing provisions twelve times in the year after the veto override. No Democratic President has made a serious effort to repeal Section 14B of Taft-Hartley, which legalized state right-to-work laws.

The South was nothing less than triumphant in shaping the nation's social welfare policy. Most of the programs promoted by labor parties in Europe—income protections for the unemployed, the old and the poor; minimum wages; and so on—would have wreaked havoc on the Southern economic system, especially its labor system. Accordingly, after the worst years of the Depression, Southern Congressmen who controlled committees joined with Republicans to defeat

Richard A. Cloward is a professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work. Frances Fox Piven is a Distinguished Professor at the Graduate School and University Center, CUNY. Their most recent book is Why Americans Don't Vote *(Pantheon).*

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the Democratic Party's capacity to build a firm working-class base, or about the Republican power brokers who maneuvered to worsen racial divisions for partisan advantage.

Instead, it is blacks and liberals who are castigated for failing to devise a strategy that would avoid the shoals of racial conflict. Presumably, they should have crafted broader or universal demands so as to make possible an alliance with the white working class, divisive Republican stratagems notwithstanding. As a matter of historical fact, blacks and their allies did demand universalistic programs, and that was precisely the problem. They fought for integration in education, housing and jobs, as well as for the same political rights enjoyed by whites. And in response to those demands for a more universalistic society, many whites rose up in outrage and defected from the Democratic Party. The notion—virtually axiomatic among political and policy analysts—that universalistic demands avoid conflict is simply wrong.

Moreover, even as blacks made universalistic demands, what they often got instead were particularistic programs, even race-specific ones, designed by national Democratic politicians to avoid conflict with the white working class. Much of the Great Society legislation was fashioned to funnel services and benefits directly to black neighborhoods precisely to avoid arousing white ethnic resentments by challenging their control of municipal services and jobs. As it happened, that strategy was not entirely successful. When riots and other expressions of anger mounted in the ghettos, some of the Great Society programs became launching pads for protest, litigation and political mobilization against white domination in the big cities, which explains why critics who bemoan the resulting working-class rage and defections now define the "social engineering" of the Great Society as a disastrous policy error.

Nothing so incenses critics as the successful drives in the 1960s to gain more income for blacks through welfare. Blacks, they say, should have demanded full employment or universal income programs, such as children's allowances, instead. But this criticism fails to take account of the crippling policies inherited from the 1930s. Workers in the United States—struggling against both the business-dominated Republican Party and the Southern oligarchy—ended up with policies favoring low inflation rather than high employment, and with a system that rested on means-tested and work-conditioned rather than universal programs. Even so, agricultural workers were simply excluded from those programs. Consequently, when agricultural modernization in the South produced millions of unemployed after World War II, migrating blacks were not eligible for anything. They were not even eligible for welfare, which fended off applicants with state residence laws, employable-mother rules, suitable-home regulations, man-in-the-house provisions and bureaucratic rebuffs. Few benefits were given out until women began welfare rights protests in the mid-1960s.

We thought at the time that obtaining welfare benefits would be a gain for the mounting numbers of impoverished families in the big cities (and we have not changed our minds). Moreover, we thought rising welfare rolls, by producing fiscal strain and worsening racial tension, would prompt the national Democratic Party to federalize welfare in order to moderate this source of fiscal stress and internal conflict in its big-city coali-

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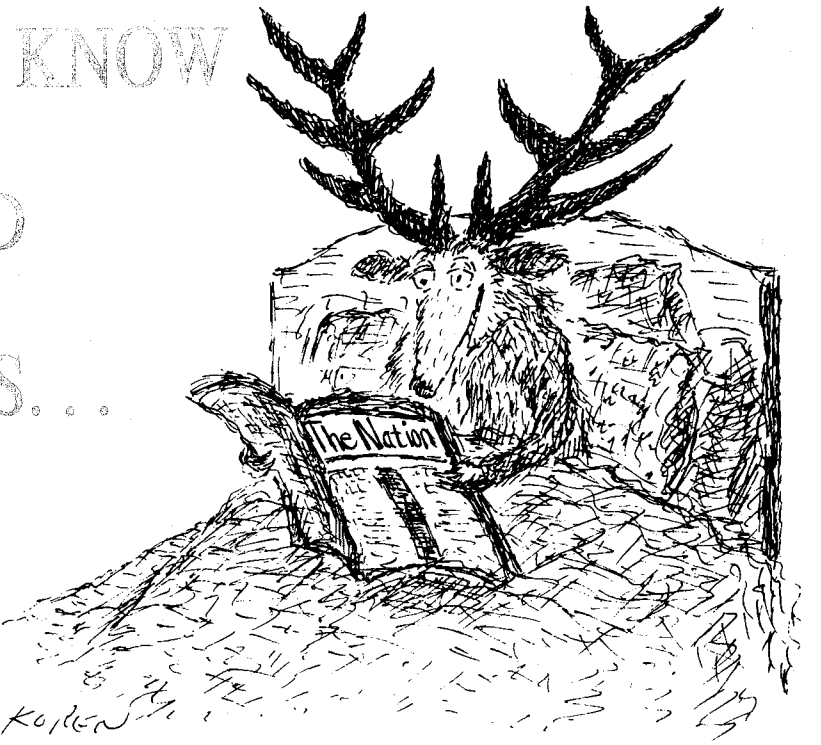

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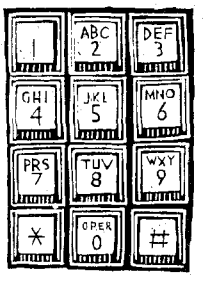

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missed opportunity to upgrade the skills of marginal workers and lower racist barriers throughout the workplace.

Thus, despite the much-touted progress of the black middle class, the racial division of labor is very much intact. By some estimates, as many as half of black men of working age lack steady employment. Countless others, men and women alike, work at poverty wages, or have no job security or health benefits and are only a paycheck away from poverty. This job crisis is the single most important factor behind the familiar tangle of problems that beset black communities.

Tragically, this nation does not have the political will to confront its racist legacy, even if that means nothing more than providing jobs at decent wages for the descendants of slaves who continue to be relegated to the fringes of the job market. Instead, a mythology has been constructed that, in ways reminiscent of slavery itself, alleges that blacks are inefficient and unproductive workers, deficient in the work habits and moral qualities that have delivered other groups from poverty. We are used to hearing this from Nathan Glazer, Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele and others on the right, but recently even voices on the left have succumbed to gratuitous clucking about "Nihilism in Black America," to use the title of Cornel West's recent disquisition in *Dissent* (Spring 1991). What is the failure to deliver jobs to yet another generation of black youth if not nihilism on a grand scale? Jim Sleeper preaches hard work and moral discipline in New York, a city where 101,000 people recently took the civil service exam for 2,000 expected openings in the Sanitation Department. Still others on the left have declared that the problems confronting black America have less to do with race than with class, a strange message for the millions of twelfth-generation Americans still condemned to live out their lives in impoverished ghettos. By reifying "class" and shifting the focus away from "race," these would-be progressives unwittingly undermine the antiracist movement. They absolve the nation of the moral and political responsibility for making restitution for its 300-year crime, and play into the hands of those on the right who have already succeeded in removing race from the national agenda.

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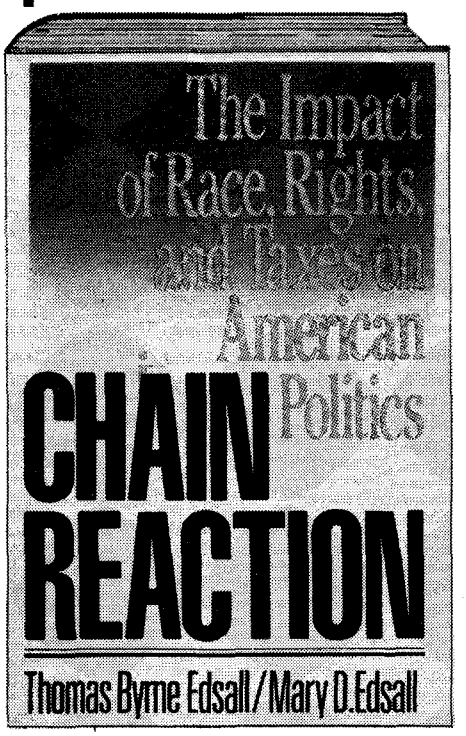

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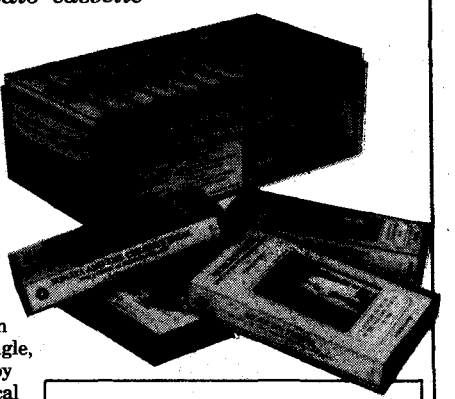

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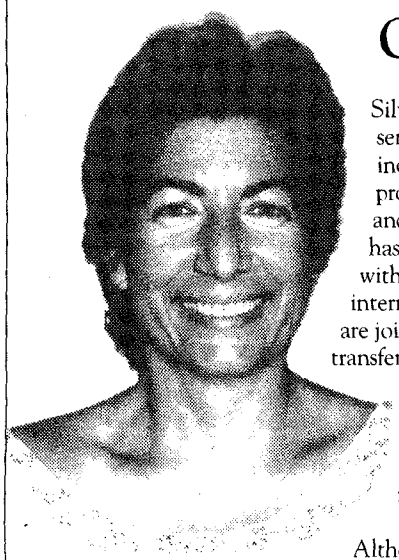
Please Join Us. Demand The Return of Silvia Baraldini to Italy.



Silvia Baraldini is an Italian citizen held as a political prisoner in the U.S. since 1982. She is serving 43 years for conspiracy, a crime that usually gets no more than 12 years. Her charges included conspiracy to commit a bank robbery that never happened and conspiracy to free prominent Black Panther leader Assata Shakur from prison. For two years, she, Susan Rosenberg and Alejandrina Torres were subject to psychological torture in the Lexington Control Unit. She has been refused repatriation to Italy, in spite of her sister's tragic death in 1990 and her own bout with a deadly uterine cancer. Repatriation is provided for by the Strasbourg Convention, an international accord signed by the U.S. and Italy. In order to defend her rights and save her life, we are joining Italian Parliamentarians and activists to build a campaign for Silvia's immediate transfer to Italy.

After twenty years of political activity in anti-war, anti-racist, feminist and international arenas, Silvia has been labelled a terrorist by the U.S. government. Despite her exemplary prison record, the Bureau of Prisons increases her security level and denies her ongoing medical care.

Although the Italian Government, 90% of the Italian Parliament, and a coalition of women's organizations in Italy petitioned the U.S. for Silvia's return, the Justice Department denied the request in December 1990. The Justice Department cited "Ms. Baraldini's continued refusal to cooperate" and "her lack of remorse for any of her crimes" as the reason. Silvia has stated "what the government is interested in is a public condemnation on my part of the political beliefs which have motivated my life for the past 25 years."

In December, 1991, the Attorney General will again review Silvia's case, and decide whether to honor the Strasbourg Treaty with Italy. We ask you to join in a campaign to stop her vindictive persecution.

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1. Send a mailgram demanding the repatriation of Silvia. Call 1.800.888.5284 & ask for message No.1125;
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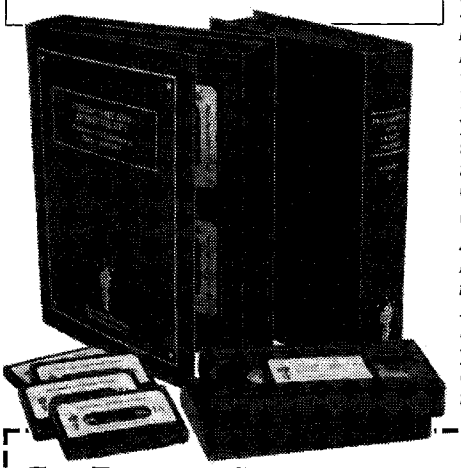

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regation in some communities. In small cities, some suburban areas and the rural South, racial isolation has been reduced. Numerous surveys reveal that black and white parents whose children have been bused to eliminate school segregation have been overwhelmingly positive about the experience. However, despite its history of mixed success, busing has lost support even among proponents of educational equality.

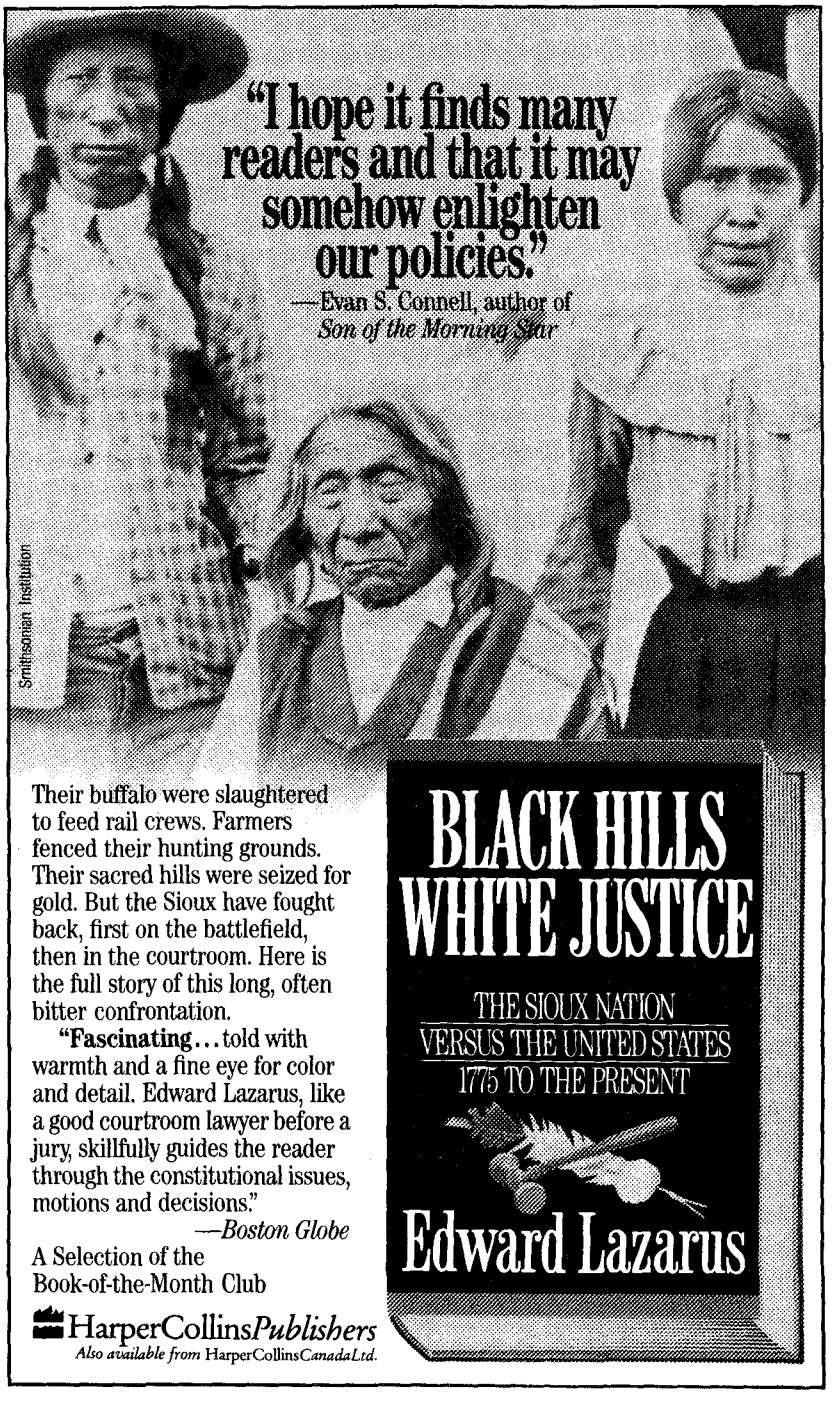
Conservatives have reformulated the terms of debate on educational issues following a successful campaign to end busing as a focal point of educational reform. Since the early 1980s, they have led a chorus singing the tune of "excellence" in education. They now argue for programs that will lead to measurable improvements in student performance. The danger they underscore is not the unfair burden imposed on black children by educational inequalities but the loss of American global pre-eminence. In order to insure that we are producing the ranks of highly skilled, technologically sophisticated students necessary to maintain our nation's competitive advantage, they advocate national achievement exams, a longer school year, periodic assessments of teacher competency and privatization of education through school voucher programs.

The American common school was created in order to provide a setting in which children from different backgrounds could learn together, free of the constraints or benefits of family background. It was an environment designed to provide the resources for individual development and an appreciation of the common good. Students were expected to become productive citizens, able to contribute to the polity as well as to the economy. The radical individualism of conservative privatization schemes would likely cripple public education and erode any sense of the public good. There aren't many convincing examples of business firms subordinating profit and competitive position to broad social goals.

The talk about choice and excellence has pre-empted attempts to focus on inequality in education. Some in the black community have directed their attention to other issues, like Afrocentric curriculums and all-male schools. The diminished national concern for equal educational opportunity is responsible in part for this inward turn. All students should experience programs of study that enhance their self-image. However, a curriculum that insists on only one vantage point for learning, whether it be European or African, will impose burdens on students by limiting their vision.

Curricular issues are important but they are no substitute for a well-articulated program that directly confronts racial inequality in education and other social arenas. All black children, female and male, deserve good schools; that goal will be realized only if we are willing to press just claims on all appropriate state institutions. Settling those claims will require that we generate a new will—in the words of the Kerner Commission, "a will to tax ourselves to the extent necessary"—to fund programs that target the conditions imposed by racial inequality.

In this vein, one of the most promising developments in American education in recent years is linked to a number of court cases that challenge the disparities in funding among local school districts. Lawsuits seeking redistribution of state funds among local school districts to balance educational resources have been filed in nearly two dozen states, beginning with a suit filed in Texas twenty-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from Reagan's welfare queens and Bush's Willie Horton. Never mind that most black Americans are solidly working class; never mind that white ethnics, insofar as they can even be counted, given the relatively optional nature of ethnic identity, have been suburbanizing en masse since the 1920s with the rest of white America. In the media myth, all race/ethnicity is deeply urban, and it's a face-off between Danny Aiello and Spike Lee.

But the 1980s ushered in a whole new fight over Baby Bear's chair. Moneyed WASPs, with the help of interlocking directorates in the White House, the fashion business and the entertainment and museum worlds, celebrated the "tradition" of WASP wealth (see Debora Silverman's *Selling Culture*). Nancy Reagan's parties, Ralph Lauren's ads, Metropolitan Museum shows and public television spectacles on *Treasure Houses of Britain* have all newly defined "culture" as "expensive culture" and ejected Angela and Dominic, Sarah and Moishe from their short-lived perch in the catbird seat. The New Traditionalist with her blond children and Rolex watch doesn't need Mamma Luisa anymore. She can abandon feminism, and her poorer sisters, all on her own.

The 1980s also ushered in a new ambivalence in media and political portrayals of white ethnicity. Geraldine Ferraro and Michael Dukakis attempted to use 1970s ethnic imagery to wrap themselves in "American family values" and got squeezed when their own kin shattered the myth. Mario Cuomo is hanging on by his fingernails, and Jim Florio's ethnic moniker has proved useless in the wake of media attacks on his progressive agenda for New Jersey.

Meanwhile, the resurgence of street racism has, especially in the East, once again associated young white-ethnic men with atavistic savagery. Bensonhurst, Howard Beach, Canarsie—the names evoke TV images of rampaging, foul-mouthed Guidos and Seans, the perfect pairing to "wilding" black and brown youth. The Southern rape complex has moved north as the media highlight black sex crimes against white women (a tiny percentage of all sexual assaults) and white male yahoo violence against perceived black miscegenators. In the new American morality play, the urban stage belongs to white yuppies, who are threatened by ignorant armies of ethnic/racial youth clashing in the night—and stealing their car radios.

Democratic politicians and their advisers are desperate to spin this script in their direction, to reverse somehow their eleven-year slide at the polls. Some continue to work with liberal, integrationist models—minus the war on poverty and federal enforcement that made integration possible in the first place. In other words, for these types, anybody can sit in Baby Bear's chair if they can afford to buy it. After all, Clarence Thomas has. Others want to spin in the opposite direction, to deny continuing racism in a nostalgic return to an idealized class-conscious New Deal coalition. The line here is that if we could just jettison "special interests"—minorities, organized feminists, gays—we could induce Guido and his dad to vote us back into the White House. This is simply white-ethnic racism and sexism redux. It won't work, in part because it asks civil rights and women's groups to do again what they did in the New Deal: give full support for a pitiful return. But most important, it won't work because Republicans have been riding welfare queens and Willie Horton for too long. They won't *allow* Democrats to sweep race under the rug. The only possible winning road is to stand squarely for economic democracy for everyone, and to have the courage to go to Guido, Angela and all their kin,

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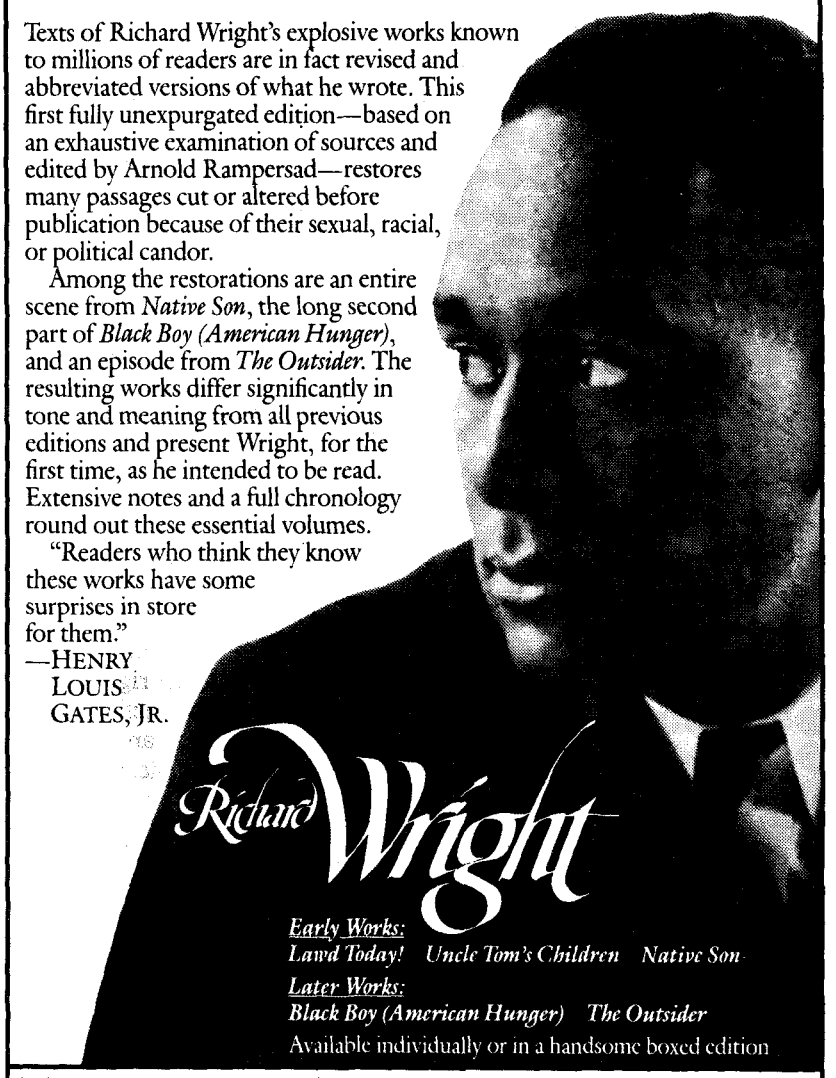

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than they would be had pre-1960 public policies continued.

Those Great Society accomplishments should be presented by Democrats to the nation as sources of pride, the leading modern examples of how the U.S. constitutional system has made progress in its promise of helping all citizens achieve better lives. Instead, cowed by avoidable electoral defeats, and not believing survey evidence of continuing popular support for Democratic positions, some liberal analysts and politicians claim that the 1960s represented a wrong turn. They argue that the New Deal categories of "needy groups" were more universal and defensible. The needs they addressed were based on troubles all voters might someday experience: sickness, disability, old age, unemployment or responsibility for raising children in poverty. In contrast, the blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and women who were targeted by legislation in the 1960s and 1970s have faced problems born of discrimination that most other citizens have not suffered. Hence they are easily cast as "special" interests, greedy for programs offering benefits for which only they are eligible.

We must give appropriate aid to those people who are now most bereft.

Calls for "universal" aid programs really mean affirmative action to help citizens at large secure basic goods, combined with many categories of special assistance—but only categories that include the traditional beneficiaries of American governmental efforts—white men. "Deserving" corporation owners, home buyers, farmers, veterans, savings and loan executives, etc. will continue to reap distinctive forms of aid from government programs. Needy groups that cannot by definition have white men as members, and *only* such groups, need not apply.

To dress up this hypocrisy, the "umpire" view of the Constitution is rolled out. Constitutionally permissible legislative programs, it is said, must aim to meet needs in ways that are color-blind and gender-blind. Only race- and gender-conscious measures required to overcome specific past injustices by identifiable guilty parties should be allowed. Courts applying constitutional standards can take notice of race and gender only when they shape motivations, for good or ill, not when programs further harm severely disadvantaged groups without apparently meaning to do so.

However, a legacy of deprivation and discrimination so longstanding and systemic simply cannot be traced to injuries by living individuals; nor can we know enough to try to "restore" American society to what it would have been if those harms had not occurred, as the umpire view demands of us. That is why supporters of aid to minorities who rely on umpire rhetoric are often betrayed by it. Solutions that allow government to remedy only proven, racially motivated individual injuries will do little to alter a status quo created as much by centuries of benefits for some as by direct harms to others. Those benefits were not supplied as remedies but as means to fulfill the system's goals for some of its citizens; why should a different rationale be required to help those left out?

To be sure, programs aimed at assisting all the needy, not just minorities, are desirable. But past experience and the realities of current structures of power indicate that such programs are more likely to help the white majority than impoverished minorities. Because the latter groups are so disproportionately disadvantaged, universal programs without special targeting are not likely to alter the ways such groups have largely been cut out of shares in the nation's collective accomplishments. The most severe and chronic wounds in American national life will continue to fester. And it is naïve to think that universal programs will somehow allow those who are genuinely interested in remedying poverty and oppressive discrimination to sidestep the "special interests" debate. To whatever extent such programs *are* effective at reaching those who need them most, critics will still find that the easiest way to attack them is to play to racism and sexism via charges of "special interest legislation."

The best way to define and defend such programs is to present the constitutional system as an enterprise to help all citizens obtain certain basic goods, with an emphasis on "all." That goal naturally calls upon us to give appropriate aid to those categories of people who are now

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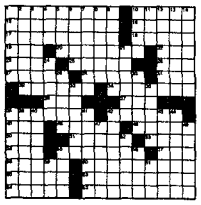

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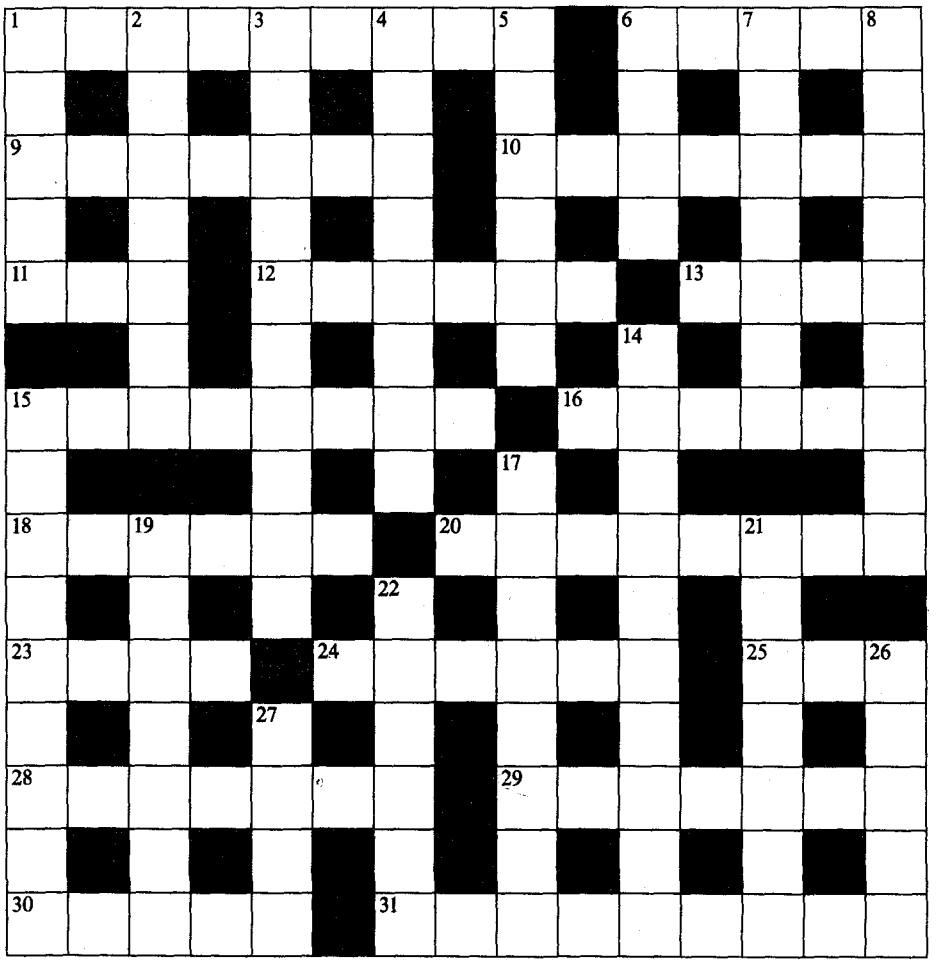

ACROSS

1 People who might be taken out pound things down, but it might prove it's Friday the 13th. (4,5)
6 See 12
9 The flesh is decomposed, which is far from generous! (7)
10 It might be on the point of writing something like "platinum." (7)
12 and 11 and 6 A person released from prison, or the occasion for a miss becoming a hit, hopefully. (6-3,5)
13 Does one find life the same old grind, or is the possibility open? (4)
15 Descriptive of such as Miss Borden, made of tin. (8)
16 Not worn so much nowadays, being a strange escort. (6)
18 and 20 Such might be considered forgers, but they could have played a different tune once. (6,8)
23 What Simon does in play. (4)
24, 25 and 30 Not necessarily a popular fighter to the south, continuing to make the joke count as some composers wrote. (14)
28 Takes in material, as one concludes. (7)
29 With nothing all right on the jaw, it still goes like the wind! (7)
30 See 24
31 Assume as a basis of argument, indeed! (Like money in the bank!) (9)

DOWN

1 and 27 Where young people might have danced to a great extent could be a revelation! (9)
2 The sort I lost to a writer? (7)
3 Do they gloss over errors? (Chesterfield might have been protected by them, too.) (10)
4 Veal, ham, brandy, they have their place! (8)
5 One in the factory is easily influenced . . . (6)
6 . . . and the Lieutenant leaves 5 with a sort of it in agony! (4)
7 This team, however much akin, could never play the Pirates! (7)
8 Do such people come from a foreign enemy site? (9)
14 Jump like a proper ram every country protects its own! (10)
15 A word of warning, of course, on what the eyes should be good for, as the seer might have. (9)
17 What oldsters evidently didn't much care for, one step up, and perhaps seen at the beach. (9)
19 The kind of ball that gives some 15 down, and break into tears at 50. (7)
21 Take full advantage of the deed. (7)
22 Santa's laugh gets employed as most inhabitants should be. (6)
26 That's the way the worldly type came in, *a* they say. (5)
27 See 1 down

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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